
BZA-1848
PURDUE FEDERAL CREDIT UNION
Variance

STAFF REPORT
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REQUEST MADE, PROPOSED USE, LOCATION:

Petitioner, represented by attorney Joe Bumbleburg, is requesting a 10' setback variance for a new monument sign along US 52 instead of the required 15' (sign setback is equal to sign height). The banking institution is located on the east side of US 52 just south of its intersection with Win Hentschel and is commonly known as 1551 Win Hentschel Boulevard, West Lafayette, Wabash 1 (SW) 23-5.

AREA ZONING PATTERNS:

This site and land north across Win Hentschel is zoned GB, General Business. To the east and west is OR (Office Research) zoning.

In 1998, Purdue Federal Credit Union was awarded a variance to allow a 68 sq. ft. free-standing sign along Win Hentschel instead of the maximum permitted 40 sq. ft. (BZA-1457). This sign was never installed.

AREA LAND USE PATTERNS:

The site in question is the headquarters for Purdue Federal Credit Union. The Purdue Research Park is located to the east and Cook Biotech (formerly Great Lakes) is west across US 52. Southeast of the site is MED Institute and Cook Biotech; to the north is an integrated center and gasoline service station.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION:

The site is located at the southeast corner of US 52 and Win Hentschel Boulevard, classified as a divided primary arterial and urban local road, respectively. Traffic counts taken in 2008 indicate that 32,010 vehicles pass this site daily on US 52.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND UTILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

The site is served by sewer and water.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Purdue Federal Credit Union is seeking additional signage for its headquarters on US 52 because of a rebranding effort. Currently the site has a fascia sign on the building facing US 52 and a smaller fascia sign on the south side of the building. In 1998, a variance was sought and awarded for a 68 sq. ft. free-standing sign; this however, was never built. Petitioner now wants to erect a monument sign along the site's US 52 frontage. While the size of the sign is not a problem, it is the placement of the sign that

is in conflict with the zoning ordinance.

The UZO imposes a sign setback that is equal to the sign height. The proposed sign is 15' tall but petitioner is proposing to place the sign only 10' from the property line. Typically in these types of variance request there is some reason why the sign must be closer to the property line, such as typography. However, in this situation, it appears landscaping is the reason for this request. The 15' tall sign has a brick base that accounts for the first 5' of the sign, so landscaping should pose no visual obstruction. In fact, it appears the landscaping in this area is shorter than 5'.

Staff can find no compelling reason to support this 15' tall sign to be any closer to the right-of-way than the required 15'. If landscaping is indeed the problem, these plantings should be relocated to an area where it will not block the sign.

Regarding this case, the Area Plan Commission unanimously voted that the sign ordinance be strictly adhered to.

Regarding the ballot items:

1. The Area Plan Commission on its February 15, 2012 determined that the variance requested **IS NOT** a use variance.

And it is staff's opinion that:

2. Granting this variance **WILL NOT** be injurious to the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community. The sign is proposed 10' from the right-of-way which is adequate distance from the travel lanes not to pose a threat.
3. Use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance request **WILL NOT** be affected in a substantially adverse manner because the proposed sign will not block any other nearby signs.
4. The terms of the zoning ordinance are being applied to a situation that **IS** common to other properties in the same zoning district. There is nothing unusual about this lot's shape, size or topography. In fact, the location of the proposed sign is elevated on a berm.
5. Strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance **WILL NOT** result in an unusual or unnecessary hardship as defined in the zoning ordinance. A conforming sign 15' tall, set back 15' from the property line could be constructed and still visible to the traveling public.

Note: Questions 5a. and 5b. need only be answered if a hardship is found in Question 5 above.

5a. The hardship involved **IS** self-imposed or solely based on a perceived reduction of or restriction on economic gain because of petitioner's desire to "appropriately

rebrand.”

5b. The variance sought **DOES NOT** provide only the minimum relief needed to alleviate the hardship. There is no minimum relief because a conforming sign can be built.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Denial